

OBITUARY :

CORNELIUS GODFREY COAKLEY, 1862-1934

Dr. Cornelius Godfrey Coakley was born in Brooklyn, August 14, 1862, eldest son of George W. Coakley, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at New York University, and Isabelle Hoe Coakley. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the College of the City of New York in 1884 and of Master of Arts in 1887. The degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred upon him by New York University Medical College in 1887 when he graduated with first honors. He served as an interne in Bellevue Hospital and early began his distinguished teaching career as instructor in Histology and Anatomy in the school from which he graduated. Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat proved especially interesting to him, partly because, at that time comparatively little was known of them. After study and research here and considerable work abroad, being chiefly impressed by the work of Professor Killian, he brought back the best of the knowledge acquirable in Europe. In 1896 he became Clinical Professor and in 1905 Professor of Laryngology at University and Bellevue Medical College where he remained until 1914 when he accepted the chair of Otolaryngology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.

His interest and ability in teaching and the clinical training of his students, internes and assistants never abated, and although inclined to be conservative, he kept abreast of any advances. His keen memory and long experience sometimes prompted him to say of innovations, that they had been tried and found wanting thirty or more years ago, before the present proposer knew anything of the subject.

Associated with the late Dr. Caldwell, he made valuable experiments and the first useful radiographs of the nasal accessory sinuses.

Dr. Coakley's amazing energy and well directed effort enabled him to accomplish much hospital work. He organized and founded the Ear, Nose and Throat Service at Bellevue Hospital in 1916 where he continued as Director until he was asked to establish a similar service at Presbyterian Hospital on the opening of the Columbia Medical Center in 1928. Since then he has assiduously worked to improve the service to patients having ailments of the ear, nose and throat, establishing a ward in the Babies Hospital a year ago. He was consultant to numerous other hospitals, including Bellevue, Woman's, Neurological Institute, Sloane Hospital, Southampton, Stuyvesant Square and Seaview Hospitals.

Among the professional societies he belonged to were The New York Academy of Medicine since 1894, Medical Society of the County of New York, New York State Medical Society, American Medical Association, American Laryngological Society, American Otological Society, American College of Surgeons, American Rhinological, Laryngological and Otological Society, the Société de Laryngologie des Hôpitaux de Paris of which he was elected a member after a series of lectures in Paris in 1924.

He was author of many articles in the field of his endeavor and a textbook used widely in many medical schools, "A Manual of Diseases of the Nose and Throat," the seventh revision of which was published in 1930.

Dr. Coakley's ability as a teacher is best exemplified by the outstanding careers of the many men trained by him, now scattered throughout the country.

His brilliance in his special field has been widely appreciated, not only in this country but in Europe and Japan. However, the memory that his host of patients, associates and friends chiefly hold of him is of his kindness, his helpful understanding of their difficulties and his unswerving integrity. Well may we say "There was a man."

JAMES W. BABCOCK.